



March 11, 1999

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM - Protection and Safety: #1-99

To: Protection and Safety Workers
Protection and Safety Supervisors

From: Chris Hanus, Protection and Safety Division Administrator
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RE: Requirements for Casework in Child Protective Service Cases

As you're aware, a recent study of "Inconclusive" Cases found in the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Register indicate significant issues that we must address to insure that the Register contains only names of individuals who should be placed on the Register. In addition, the Study identified that specific policies are not consistently followed in cases accepted for initial assessment.

The following direction highlights specific requirements in need of our attention. Staff will be expected to attend to these requirements in all cases. This memo does not replace the Protection and Safety Policy or Guidebooks.

1. Parents and all children in the family will be interviewed by the worker. If a child cannot be interviewed due to age or physical limitation, the worker needs to view the child to make an assessment of the child's development, vulnerability, etc. Interpreters are to be used if an individual has language or physical limitations. If parents or children are not interviewed, the reason will be clearly explained in the narrative. Possible reasons for not conducting interviews include: child's age/language skills; parent's refusal to speak to a worker; law enforcement has already done a comprehensive and thorough interview of the child AND there is no need for additional information to complete the initial assessment; unable to locate the individuals; law enforcement has interviewed the perpetrator and a further interview is not necessary to complete the risk assessment.

2. All cases accepted for initial assessment will include an assessment of risk. This assessment will be clearly documented in the case record.
3. All cases accepted for initial assessment will include documentation of a safety plan when needed. If there are no safety issues, this will be clearly documented.
4. In addition to documentation of risk assessments and safety plans, case records will include specific documentation concerning the worker decision on the case status determination and the disposition of the case. The documentation will be sufficient to reflect the decisions made and include documents and information used for corroboration (clearly identifying witnesses, copies of law enforcement reports, court orders, medical reports, etc.).
5. There will be a supervisory review of all cases.

We recognize your commitment to keeping children safe and providing the best possible services. The Study provides us with a challenge as well as an opportunity to improve our system and renew the public confidence in the validity of the Central Register. We appreciate your contribution to those improvements. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

cc: Ron Ross, HHS Director
Dennis Loose, HHS Deputy Director
Service Area Administrators
Protection and Safety Division Staff